Mr, Paul Valentine
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Dear Paul,

Your current series reminds me of some agent provocateur activity. My recollection may be too hazy but for what it may be worth this is what I recall.

Some years ago when I was in Sammie Abbott's office (296-4350) there were several black men there. Sammie was doing some art work for them. He introduced us and told them of my work on the King assassination. They were organizing some kind of commemorative meeting, Dr. King's birthday or an anniversary of his death. Not sure. Maybe some other subject. Anyway, the one of the two I recall fairly clearly, a rather substantial type, asked me what I'd say if they asked me to speak. I said I'd speak critically of the failure of the black community to have any genuine interest in that assassination. He liked that and asked me to speak.

The meeting was at Rev. Wendt's church, I think on a Saturday afternoon. Quite early this man came to me at the church and told me there had been a threat against any honky who would dare to say a word at all critical of any blacks. This threat came from what I recall as some kind of 14th St. gang of supposed Black Panthers. I was asked not to say what I'd planned to avoid trouble and I agreed. Then I was delayed on the speakers list and asked to speak about two minutes only and again I agreed. I was close to the last of a long list.

My only clear recollection of the other speakers is that the editor of the Quicksilver Times had to be crazy or a police provocateur. His was pretty violent stuff. Extreme as hell.I didn't know him.

About as soon as the meeting was over I returned home.

Later I was told that those from whom the threat came had been chased out of town by the Black Panthers of whom they were or pretended to be part. I am pretty sure that the Panther organization believed one or more of these unknown 14th-Streeters (that is, unknown to me) was a provocateur. I am also pretty sure that they had a reputation for violence but were themselves threatened by black men whose capability of doing violence to them was beyond question. Maybe it is that the real Panthers had or brought in an enforcer, one whose warning would be heeded. I am clear on two things: the threats to me came from those who were regarded as tough characters capable of causing the violence at the church they threatened; and they were chased the next day by one or more whose credentials needed no authentication.

I have no way of knowing whether these tough guys whose purposes were, pretty clearly, disturbance, were police agents. Or if it will interest you. If it does maybe Sammie will recall the incident and the man who impressed me as a pretty solid-type citizen. My recollection is of a man not less than 5'9", about 160 lbs, maybe a little more, and not less than about 40 years of age. Not a kid.

Sammie is one of those whose supposed radical ideas have become the accepted beliefs of a majority of the community. He was then giving leadership on many issues, especially freeways and black rights. I'll be surprised if he was not a major target of any intelligence operations.

My recollection includes the seriousness with which the threat against me and the meeting/church were taken by those who organized the meeting, especially this one black man. My impression at the time was that too many of the speakers fit what I recalled of my days investigating private-detective provocateur operations of the 1930s.

Best,